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Hurricane Celeste. Program 437 was knocked out of commission by Hurricane Celeste from 19 August to 13 September 1972. And then because of damage from the hurricane, the system had to be removed from service from 8 December 1972 to 29 March 1973.

On 19 August, Celeste passed approximately 21 miles northeast of Johnston Island, buffeting the island with sustained winds of 100 knots and gusts to 130 knots. The surf whipped up by the winds produced 30 to 40 foot waves which hit the north and northeast sides of the island. All personnel were evacuated to Hawaii prior to arrival of Celeste.⁸

On 25 August 1972, ADC issued SMAMA to deploy a damage assessment team to the island. The first elements of the SMAMA team arrived on 28 August 1972, the date that a Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) directed civil engineer survey team completed its initial assessment of damage to all facilities and real property installed equipment (RPIE), including that belonging to Detachment 1, 10th ADS. The PACAF survey team advised that "PACAF would fund repairs to all...J. I. facilities and RPIE."⁹ At the end of FY 73 the cost of ADC repairs was still not known.

The SMAMA team inspected the two ground guidance stations (GGS-1 and GGS-2) and the two Program 437

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missiles and found that some equipment sustained major salt water damage.¹⁰ The damage assessment report, submitted on 30 August 1972, noted that the electronics might be operable after more drying time and cleaning effort. All equipment sustained corrosion as the result of shutting down the air-conditioning system for some 10 days.¹¹ Subsequent reports from the Detachment 1, 10th ADS, revealed further damage to the system. Colonel W. A. Arnold, Jr., 10th ADS Commander, stated that:¹²

1. Hurricane Celeste caused major water entry into GGS-1, GGS-2, supply, and supporting laboratories in Building 129.

2. With the exceptions of the computer system, it appeared that all equipment damage had been or would be repaired locally at a minimum cost.

3. Facilities and RPIE had been, or would be restored at PACAF expense.

4. Corrosion caused by the storm would require a continuing corrosion control effort. That program was in progress.

) The Program 437 system was placed back on its normal 30-day standby readiness status at 1630Z on 13 September 1972 and remained in service until 1900Z on 8 December 1972, when it had to be removed.¹³

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Placing the system back on normal status on 13 September 1972 was too optimistic, as events proved. Further, checkout of the system's 1004-II processors revealed damage beyond the repair capabilities of on-site personnel. On 20 September, the 10th ADS Commander reported the GGS-1 computer, including the 1004 processor, as being capable of only minimum support of Program 437. The GGS-2 was unserviceable by 20 September 1972.¹⁴

In an effort to correct the situation, the 10th ADS Director of Maintenance asked the Warner Robins Air Materiel Area (WRAMA) for depot level maintenance assistance.¹⁵ UNIVAC representatives were sent by WRAMA, arriving at Johnston Island on 7 December.¹⁶ The Program 437 system was removed from service on 3 December 1972, as shown above.

The UNIVAC technicians found the GGS-2 computer unit to be unrepairable. To get Program 437 back into service, the computer from GGS-3 at Vandenberg AFB, California, was sent to Johnston Island and installed in GGS-1. The GGS-2 computer was replaced with the GGS-1 computer. During this shifting of equipment, the 10th ADS estimated that Program 437 would be in commission by 1 March 1973. However, this too proved to be optimistic. The system was not returned to service until 29 March 1973.¹⁷

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Transfer of Johnston Island Host Responsibility.

Responsibility for host management of Johnston Island was transferred from USAF "b1" effective 1 July 1973. Agreements between the two agencies were signed on 30 May 1973 by USAF and 1 June 1973 by the "b1" Until new agreements could be negotiated between ADC and the new host, the Host-Tenant agreements that existed between ADC and PACAF would be honored.¹⁹